

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00
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NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 ACDA-07 OMB-01
TRSE-00 IO-13 /074 W
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FM AMEMBASSY LISBON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2480
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MADRID
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMCONSUL OPORTO
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA
USMISSION NATO
DIA WASHDC
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 LISBON 5994

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT PO
SUBJECT: COMMUNISTS CALL FOR RESIGNATION OF SOARES GOVERNMENT

REF: LISBON 5780

SUMMARY: SPEAKING FOR THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE, PCP LEADER
CUNHAL HAS CALLED FOR THE RESIGNATION OF THE SOCIALIST
GOVERNMENT; SUSPENSION OF RECENTLY-ENACTED LEGISLATION;
DISSOLUTION OF THE ASSEMBLY; AND GENERAL ELECTIONS. CUNHAL'S
CALL FOR THE OUSTER OF THE SOARES GOVERNMENT SIGNALS A
DEFINITIVE BREAK WITH PAST PCP POLICIES AND MAY INVOLVE SOME
OPPOSITION IN THE STREETS. AT THIS POINT IT IS NOT CLEAR
HOW FAR THE PCP IS PREPARED TO GO IN TRYING TO DERAIL THE
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DEMOCRATIC PROCESS BY EXTRA-CONSTITUTIONAL MEANS. WITH
THE SOARES GOVERNMENT ALSO UNDER PRESSURE FROM THE
PARTIES TO ITS RIGHT, THE SOCIALISTS WILL PROBABLY
HAVE TO RELY MAINLY ON THEIR OWN RESOURCES IN SEEKING
TO BEAT BACK THIS LATEST COMMUNIST CHALLENGE.
END SUMMARY.

1. THE PCP'S DESPERATE BID: IN THE AFTERMATH OF RECENT ASSEMBLY DEFEATS, PCP SECRETARY-GENERAL CUNHAL HAS CALLED FOR THE RESIGNATION OF THE SOARES GOVERNMENT, THE SUSPENSION OF LEGISLATION RECENTLY PASSED BY THE ASSEMBLY, THE CONSTITUTIONAL DISSOLUTION OF THE ASSEMBLY, AND GENERAL ELECTIONS WITHIN 90 DAYS. THE PCP CENTRAL COMMITTEE MET JULY 31 AND CUNHAL ANNOUNCED THE RESULTS OF THAT SESSION AT AN AUG 1 PRESS CONFERENCE.

2. THE SOCIALIST BETRAYAL: IN ITS 29-PAGE REPORT THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE CONCLUDED THAT:
-- THE SOARES GOVERNMENT HAS RENEGED ON ITS CAMPAIGN PROMISES, VIOLATED THE CONSTITUTION, AND OPENLY BECOME A TOOL OF THE "RIGHT" AGAINST THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE WORKING CLASS AND THE PEOPLE OF PORTUGAL;
-- AS A RESULT OF INTERNAL CONTRADICTIONS AND INCONSISTENCIES, THE EVOLUTION OF PS POLICY IS NO LONGER LIKELY;
-- THE ONLY REAL OPTIONS ARE A NEW FASCIST DISTATORSHIP OR A PCP-SUPPORTED RETURN TO THE GOALS OF THE REVOLUTION.

3. THE DEMOCRATS RESPOND:
-- PS: SOCIALIST PARTY SPOKESMAN JAIME GAMA NOTED THAT THE PCP DECLARATIONS DEMONSTRATE THE COMMUNISTS' INABILITY TO FUNCTION WITHIN A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY. THE POLITICS OF THE PCP ARE THE POLITICS OF A PARTY WITH ONE FOOT IN THE GRAVE, HE SAID. IT WILL BE UP TO THE COMMUNISTS AS TO WHETHER THEY

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INCLUDED THEMSELVES IN THE PROGRESS OF PORTUGUESE DEMOCRACY.

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THEIR RECENT DECLARATION, HE CONCLUDED, REVEALS THEY HAVE NO SUCH DESIRE.

-- PSD: PSD DEPUTY SERVULO CORREIA COMMENTED THAT THERE IS NO CURRENT JUSTIFICATION FOR THE DISSOLUTION OF THE ASSEMBLY. DURING THE PAST YEAR THE PORTUGUESE PEOPLE HAVE DEMONSTRATED THEIR ABILITY TO FUNCTION WITHIN A MODIFIED SYSTEM. CORREIA CHARACTERIZED THE PCP LEADERSHIP AS A GROUP OF FRUSTRATED STALINISTS WHO CANNOT LIVE WITH DEMOCRACY.

-- CDS: ADELINO AMARO DA COSTA, PRESIDENT OF THE CDS PARLIAMENTARY GROUP, CALLED A SUSPENSION OF LAWS PASSED BY THE ASSEMBLY ABSURD AND UNTHINKABLE. THE ASSEMBLY, HE SAID, REPRESENTS THE WILL OF THE PORTUGUESE PEOPLE. HE ANNOUNCED THAT THE CDS DID NOT FAVOR ELECTIONS THIS YEAR. THE PEOPLE ARE NOT PREPARED AND ELECTIONS NOW WOULD ONLY RESULT IN A CONFIDENTIAL

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HIGH ABSENTEEISM. COSTA, HOWEVER, NOTED THAT THE PCP POSITION MAKES A CENSURE VOTE EASIER AND THAT THE CDS HOPES THE SOCIALISTS REALIZE THE VALIDITY OF THE "DEMOCRATIC CONVERGENCE" PROCESS AND WIL ADHERE TO IT.

4. COMMENT: CUNHAL'S CALL FOR THE OUSTER OF SOARES RESULTS FROM THE SOCIALIST GOVERNMENT'S PRESSURE AGAINST THE COMMUNISTS IN THE RURAL AREAS AND ON SUCH ISSUES AS WORKER PRODUCTIVITY AND CONTROL. AS A PARLIAMENTARY PRESCRIPTION, THE PCP PROGRAM IS A NON-STARTER AND THE PARTY KNOWS IT. BUT THE SERIES OF SETBACKS THE PARTY HAS SUFFERED AT THE HANDS OF THE SOCIALISTS HAS NOW FORCED THE PCP LEADERSHIP TO SIGNAL A DEFINITIVE BREAK WITH ITS PAST POLICIES IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN FACE WITH THE PARTY FAITHFUL AND PRSERVE ITS FOLLOWING. ALTHOUGH CUNHAL CAREFULLY STRESSED THAT HIS ANTI-SOCIALIST PROGRAM WAS TO BE CARRIED OUT WITHIN CONSTITUTIONAL NORMS, THE NEW COMMUNIST POLICY WILL PROBABLY INVOLVE SOME VIOLENCE AND OPPOSITION IN THE STREETS. AT THIS POINT IT IS NOT CLEAR HOW FAR THE PCP IS PREPARED TO GO IN

TRYING TO DERAIL THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS BY EXTRA-
CONSTITUTIONAL MEANS.

5. WITH COMMUNIST-LED PRESSURE RISING ON THE LEFT, THE
SOCIALIST GOVERNMENT WOULD NORMALLY EXPECT TO FIND SOME
COUNTERVAILING FORCE ON ITS RIGHT. BUT THIS MAY NOT BE THE
CASE IF AMARO DA COSTA'S REMARKS ABOUT CENSURE BECOME OPERATIVE.
THE COMMUNISTS MAY HAVE ANTICIPATED THAT THE RIGHT-WING
PARTIES WOULD NOT RISE TO THE SUPPORT OF THE SOCIALISTS,
IN VIEW OF RECENT PSD/CDS POSTURE TOWARDS THE SOARES
GOVERNMENT. THE SOCIALISTS WILL PROBABLY HAVE TO RELY
MAINLY ON THEIR OWN RESOURCES IN SEEKING TO BEAT BACK
THIS LATEST COMMUNIST CHALLENGE.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
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Concepts: OPPOSITION PARTIES
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
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Office: ACTION EUR
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Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
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Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 LISBON 5780
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
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Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1421210
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: COMMUNISTS CALL FOR RESIGNATION OF SOARES GOVERNMENT
TAGS: PINT, PGOV, PO
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/4be69e4f-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009